

that beautiful country that has been so misgoverned for so long.

And I applaud his statement. It is in that spirit that I undertake this initiative. And I want to close by reaffirming the determination of the United States to restore democracy and President Aristide as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

### **Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With the Hispanic Caucus**

*March 16, 1993*

**Q.** Mr. President, what are you doing in this meeting tonight, or this afternoon? Some special—

**The President.** Well, we're going to talk about a lot of things of interest to the caucus, and I'm going to listen. We're going to talk about the economic program, and they're going to talk about some things that they're interested in in the administration. And they can talk about it when the meeting is over. I'm listening today.

### **Surgeon General**

**Q.** Mr. President, could you tell us why Dr. Novello is being asked to step down as Surgeon General before her term expires?

**The President.** I don't know what arrangements—she's going to continue in the Department of Health and Human Services, and I have a very high regard for her. And I told Donna Shalala when I appointed her Secretary of HHS that I had a very strong feeling about wanting my health department director from home to be the Surgeon General, but that I very strongly approved of the record Dr. Novello has made and I hoped that we could persuade her to stay on. And this is an arrangement they all worked out. I don't know the details and the timing. I can't comment on it. I just don't know anything about that.

NOTE: The exchange began at 5:51 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

### **Remarks at the American Ireland Fund Dinner**

*March 16, 1993*

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for once again participating in the great American charade designed to convince people that the President has more authority than the Speaker of the House. Now, if I were a prime minister, I wouldn't have to worry about that. *[Laughter]* Mr. Prime Minister, it's a delight to welcome you to our Nation's Capital, and I look forward to our visit tomorrow. I want to congratulate Chairman O'Reilly. Let me ask you: Do you like the purple? *[Laughter]* I want you to understand that is not royal purple. That is a substitute, because he made the ultimate sacrifice; he gave his President the green.

I want to thank all those who worked so hard to make this dinner successful. It's often remarked that on St. Patrick's Day we're all Irish, or we wish we were. I am actually part Irish, and I have often been accused of having a certain gift for blarney—*[laughter]*—although those were not the words used last year when that was said. I'm glad to see Senator Kennedy and Congressman Kennedy and Mrs. Smith in the audience. But, you know, President Kennedy was the first Irish Catholic to become President. But though a Baptist from Arkansas, I'm the first graduate of a Catholic university to become President. I'm glad to see Father O'Donovan out there, my president, of Georgetown. Thank you.

As a younger man, I went through a period of intense uncertainty about whether I should pursue a career in music or a career in politics. I was happy to learn that the Prime Minister, whom you affectionately called the Taoiseach—you know, I want the Members of the Congress to learn that. I like that, the chieftain. It has a good feeling. *[Laughter]* He's been an exponent of one of